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## MORAL INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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REV. DR. NEWTON.

THE supreme need of ethical education in our public schools ought surely to need no assertion. In any rational theory of education everything should lead up to character and conduct. The individual's own development finds its completion in a noble character. The interests of society are not secured in a system which turns out brains minus a conscience. Educational authorities have always recognized character as the end of education. When Socrates had been shown a beautiful youth he wanted to know whether his soul was equally beautiful. Plato said: "I mean by education that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children." ("Laws," Book II., 653.—Jowett.) Locke declared: "It is virtue then, direct virtue, which is the head and invaluable part to be aimed at in education." ("Thoughts on Education.") Milton, in characteristically beautiful language, writes: "The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents, by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue." ("Tractate on Education.")

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With Pestalozzi and Froebel character was the good supremely and passionately sought. Herbert Spencer's work on education treats of it as "Intellectual, Moral, and Physical."

The lack of proper provision for ethical education in our public schools is painfully patent.\* This defect our public schools share with our private schools. The task of ethical education is so delicate and fine that the wisest may well hesitate over it. Job work here is worse than no work. Prigs and pharisees are the products turned out from poor character-

\* General provisions for moral education are found in the legislation of some of the States, and in the schedules of studies and directions for teachers issued by many local Boards of Education. The Legislature of Massachusetts, in 1789, directed teachers "to impress on the minds of children and youth committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornament of human society and the bases upon which a republican institution is founded." Philadelphia enumerates "morals and manners," among the studies to be pursued in its schools. In the "directions to teachers," its Board of Education observes: "Remarks upon morals and manners should follow the reading of the Bible by the principal. These remarks should be made in the presence of the whole school, and as frequently as the incidents of the school may suggest." These occasional instructions are urged as a means of school discipline: "Respectfulness to superiors, obedience to parents and teachers; honesty and truthfulness thus enforced and impressed upon the mind of the pupils will be found a powerful auxiliary to the discipline of the school."

The Board of Education of New-York (1867) places "manners and morals" among the studies of the primary schools, and directs as follows for the several grades: Sixth grade—"Instruction is to be given in manners and morals, and illustrated by means of the incidents of school and home"; fifth grade—ditto; fourth grade—"Instruction for cultivating love to parents, kindness, obedience, neatness, truthfulness, and politeness, to be illustrated by examples, incidents, and anecdotes"; third grade—ditto; second grade—"Improve opportunities in the daily exercises of the schools by conversations upon the subjects of the reading lesson and all appropriate incidents to inculcate respectfulness, obedience to parents, honesty, and truthfulness"; first grade—"Instruction by means of school incidents and anecdotes, so conducted as to aid in the discipline of the school." In the schedules for the grammar schools no reference is made to the subject. The Chicago Board of Education has some admirable instructions to its teachers, worthy of a place in the directions of all School Boards. See "Barnard's Journal of Education," vol. xix., p. 552.

Few of our School Boards offer any detailed directions; the work is one that cannot show for itself as does other teaching; so that practically this whole subject comes to be left very much to each individual principal and teacher.

factories, and no fashion for uglinesses is likely to bring them into favor. It is so easy to spoil a soul in handling it! Still, something needs to be done, as carefully as may be. That something must be done in the people's schools. There is no other institution to which the State may safely trust this most important task. The Sunday-school is too amateurish to achieve a thorough ethical culture. An hour and a half once a week can impart but little instruction, and can secure no training. With the present pre-occupation of orthodox Sunday-schools in dogmatic and institutional religion, even their limited possibilities as ethical educators are largely wasted. Were the Sunday-school an ideal institution, as such it would still labor under the fatal defect of divorcing ethical from intellectual culture. Division of labor cannot be carried so far as to exempt our day-schools from the care of character. A child cannot be cut up into bits and jobbed-out to different specialists, and then be made up under the hands of a Master of Morals. Morality must be learned in school, as in actual life, amid secular activities. The State must assume her rightful function in the culture of character. How, then, can our present system be led on into this highest office of education?

Ethical education may be carried on in three ways: through direct instruction, through training, and through the influence of the spiritual atmosphere created in the school.

I. *Instruction.* This should be at first, not talking about virtue, but talking up virtue; not the giving of scientific knowledge concerning goodness, but the presentation of goodness in forms that will cause children to fall in love with it. Nature's order is first the concrete and then the abstract, first the example of the law and then the principle of it. The grammar of ethics should come later. Natural, unconscious action of the moral sense, responsive to the forms of beautiful goodness presented to it, makes healthier children than any elaborate studies in ethics in the best of scientific manuals. Casuistry forms good conscience-calisthenics for tougher years.

The opening exercises of the schools might include choice ethical readings, brief accounts of noble men and women, tales of brave and fine actions, golden sayings, parables and allegories of great teachers, illustrating character and conduct. There is no lack of material for such readings in righteousness. Plutarch's sketches of the grand old Greeks and Romans are full of nutri-

ment for a noble high-mindedness. Froissart's "Chronicles," and Fuller's "Worthies of England" would yield choice material for the early periods of the modern world. More modern history abounds in tales of noble manhood and womanhood. What a text-book of patriotism is the story of Garibaldi! Our own history is rich in great characters, only less conspicuous than Washington and Lincoln. Every form of personal goodness, every phase of social righteousness finds ample illustration in the recorded anecdotes of actual men and women. The daily incidents of the newspapers furnish affecting models of heroism and tragic examples of the consequences of vice. The *sagas* of the ancients abound in ethical parables, nature-myths woven into heroic legends. Kingsley's "Heroes" and Hawthorne's "Wonder-Book" are charming specimens of the ethical power of these old stories. Scenes and sketches from our great novelists, and passages from the great poets, might well form part of such readings. Between the equally irrational clamorings of the advocates and opponents of "The Bible in the School," there is no chance probably, as yet, for the still, small voice of reason. Experience may be trusted to convince men of open minds that in the world of letters there are no writings so effective in the culture of character as portions of the sacred books of the Hebrews—the people whose specialty was ethical passion—and of the Christians. Matthew Arnold has divined this, with characteristic sagacity, and, in the "Great Prophecy of Israel's Restoration," has prepared the noble poetry of the second section of Isaiah for use as a primer in schools. One of the prime benefits to follow from a rational conception of the Bible is the ability of men of different religious opinions to consider practically this question of the ethical use of the Bible-writings.

The golden words of the other great Bibles of humanity should be utilized in the same way. These righteousness-readings might pursue a systematic order, covering in the course of a school year, several times, all the great personal and social virtues, without necessarily laying bare to the children the framework of the classification. For such readings there should, of course, be prepared a rich Anthology, as a basis on which each principal could build his own selection.

Instruction could also be given, and perhaps with most effectiveness, in an indirect manner, through some of the special departments. Indirect ethical instruction insinuates itself most

readily into the mind. An oblique line is the line of greatest power in communicating this knowledge. As Emerson says: "It is the things of which we do not think, that educate us." The "readers" of the younger children might be still more entirely captured for the purposes of character-building, and be made to consist chiefly, as they do now in part, of choice passages of ethical value. History, as now studied, has little or nothing of an ethical character. Without displacing its really important instruction as to past affairs, it might be made to throw character into the foreground. American and English history afford just as fine a field for character-studies as Hebrew history, if we had the dominant desire of the ancient Jews to study character. The ethical aspects of great men and the moral bearings of great events should be kept ever in mind by a wise teacher, and would afford constant opportunities of exercising the child-conscience in a natural and interesting way.

The physical sciences are, without any conscious aim in this direction on the part of the teacher, a constant instruction in some valuable moral qualities—humility, openness of mind, love of truth and reality, patience, judgment, etc. They can be made to further the culture of character directly. The universal reign of law can be pointed out, and its double action in beneficence or maleficence, according as we intelligently understand and loyally obey it, or as we ignorantly neglect and willfully defy it. Moral laws can be shown to be grounded in nature; to be no mere arbitrary impositions of society, no illusions of the imagination, but part of "the order and constitution of things." The great ethical principles can be traced in terms of physics, in the life of the bird and beast. The bee-hive and the ant-hill can be made text-books in social ethics, parables of a true commonwealth and a real republic. That most difficult and delicate of didactic tasks, that of inducting the child-mind into pure and reverent thought concerning the sexual relations, may, perhaps, best be achieved through a poetic reading of the loves of the flowers. Thus it was, as we know from his own pen, that Froebel caught sight of the great law which runs through all life, and lifts the reproductive function into sacredness. These side-lights may reveal to the child the infinite mystery of order in which we live, and move, and have our being; and may place him in the rightful attitude of reverence toward law and of glad consent to it, which is the soul of virtue.

Instruction might also be effectively given through talks and lectures, illustrated often, by competent specialists, upon the physiological effects of common vices, such as drunkenness, gluttony, etc. The elder boys and girls could be thus taught separately, by one of their own sex, the laws of purity and their bearings on life. In these and other ways a quite sufficient amount of ethical instruction might be secured, without any radical change in the present system of our public schools. To this might possibly be added, for the advanced pupils, some systematic instruction in the nature and authority of ethical principles, and their relation to conventional morality, by some specially qualified teacher, if such instruction could be given without raising dogmatic issues.

II. *Training.* Miss Peabody once said, in happy paradox, that we "learn goodness by being good." To make children good even for awhile, to establish during a portion of each day a rule under which they shall conform to the laws of right conduct—this is the best way of causing them to learn goodness. Training is more important than instruction in ethics. Habits are the molds into which the plastic spirit is to be run, shaping it into noble character. Much is even now being done through the discipline of our public schools. The children come under a system of law which they cannot ignore, change nor defy; which rewards their obedience and punishes their disobedience. This alone, to the children of lawless homes, is an immense boon. Obedience, which Kant held to be the fundamental virtue, is rigidly enforced. Punctuality, cleanliness, and other simple virtues, are drilled into the nature. Good manners are enjoined. The effort needful to master the daily lessons is a training of the will—the central force of character. The spur of the "marking" rouses ambition, energy, "go-aheadativeness," which are at least antiseptics to the lower forms of vice. These, with the other factors of character-training, count for much.

But with these good elements there are commingled influences by no means wholesome. Self-love is a powerful motor, but a dangerous one. Nature uses it to begin her work of development, but hastens to outrank it by a nobler motor. It is doubtless needful to goad children with this spur; but a sparing use should be made of it, or we shall have men and women sensitive to no finer impulses. There is a grave danger in the reckless appeal to the selfish instincts made by the

prevalent system of ranking and rewarding pupils. Good work comes to be done not for the work's sake, nor for the sake of others, nor even for the sake of one's own improvement; but solely for the name and fame, the position and profit that it brings. We thus train the oncoming generations for the same unhappy struggle after self-advancement that is now eating into public spirit in the State, into purity in society, and into honor in the business world. In our impatience for intellectual results, we are thus sacrificing character upon the altar of knowledge. The punishments of our present system, as its rewards, are seriously faulty. They need to be made less physical and more moral, less arbitrary and more natural, less tyrannous and more just. Suspicion, espionage, and fear are demoralizing influences. "To be found out" comes to be the definition of "wrong." Scholars establish a code of school-morals,—as is well known to be the case in some schools,—and count it no wrong to cheat the master, or even to lie directly to him. Children need to be thrown, as far as possible, upon their honor; and always to be treated respectfully, until they have forfeited this right. Truthfulness and self-respect are seminal virtues, at all costs to be cherished in the young. The experience of prison reformers might give some valuable hints in the right use of punishment. The great specialists in penology have made of it a new and divine instrument in the training of character.

Perhaps the most important change to be made in the discipline of our public schools is in the introduction of higher motives. Merit must be rewarded and faults must be punished, but rewards and punishments alike need to be lifted to a higher plane. What these higher motives are can be better seen by a morning spent in a true kindergarten than from pages of writing. The little ones are trained there in true morality, fellow-feeling, brotherliness, justice, kindness, love. Froebel has embodied in the beautiful culture of the kindergarten the essential spirit of ethics. When the kindergarten comes to be made the basis for our public-school system, the most important years will be rescued for a wise moral training—a training which will fashion the being aright from the start, and which, we may hope, will gradually shape the school that shall rest upon it to its nobler type of character-culture.

Self-government ought certainly to be the aim to which all



moral education should look, and ought to be developed, as far as possible, in school years. As a means to this end, it might be worth while to feel along in the direction taken by certain notable experiments in education.\* The great English schools have long made the Sixth Form responsible for the order of the rest of the school. The school established by the Messrs. Hill (Rowland Hill was one of the brothers) entrusted the entire charge of the order to the boys themselves. The superintendent of one of our own Houses of Refuge achieved marvels among boys, formerly "amenable only to the harshest discipline," by throwing the community gradually upon its own self-government; so that at last he did away with all watchmen, and left all cases of discipline to be decided by a jury of the boys. The schools of a republic might with especial propriety experiment carefully in this direction. The principles of ethics might be interestingly and effectively studied by the elder scholars in "courts," before which actual or supposititious cases of alleged wrong-doing could be brought for trial, the scholars acting as jury and as lawyers. Thus the child-conscience could be exercised and instructed in the rights of person and property; upon the ethics of law-abidingness, of truthfulness, of intemperance, of strikes, etc. Mr. MacMullen, who in his own school tried this experiment, tells how he found one-fifth of his boys at one time defending "prompting," "two of them very shrewdly and ingeniously," and a large number defending the rightfulness of robbing orchards. One of our private schools in New England tried successfully the experiment of a stated assembly, like the Senate or the House of Representatives of the United States; in this character the school-debates were carried on upon questions of social and political importance, familiarizing the boys' minds with the forms of our government, and interesting them in public affairs, while training them in the self-control of courteous discussion.

Public spirit might be nurtured by interesting observances upon the great national holidays: Washington's Birthday, Decoration Day, Fourth of July, etc. Societies might be formed among the children, looking to the cultivation of temperance and thrift. In some of the French schools savings societies have been introduced with marked benefit. If an afternoon were devoted

\* The pamphlet prepared and issued by Mr. MacMullen, 1262 Broadway, on "*Self-government in Schools.*"

once a week to such court and congress and society sessions, the results might be very valuable in the characters of the children.

A library of well-selected literature in each school could be made a powerful adjunct in the culture of character. Books and papers are, after all, the chief educators. And here the children pursue an elective course. To teach them to choose wisely those silent masters who are to mold their lives, is one of the best services to be rendered them. For lack of such training, they patronize the host of demoralizing teachers who await them on the news-stands, and who teach them from sensational tales and tainted novels. In nothing is a guiding hand more needed than in the friendship of books. All would never follow such guidance, and none might follow it wholly; but many could be influenced by it; and, if the coöperation of parents was secured, the present ravenous consumption of low literature might be checked, and a better taste formed. There is no safeguard against a bad taste equal to the creation of a good taste.

A workshop in each school would be another valuable annex. Our present divorce between intellectual and manual education is fruitful of moral ills. It robs the hand-worker of that interest in his labor which it could and should yield him, and of the safeguards it might throw around him in the human hunger for "more life and fuller." It unfits the mass of those who are graduated from our Common Schools for the common works of the mass of mankind, in all lands and ages; while it fails to fit them for the "genteel" pursuits to which they aspire, and in which only the superior minds can hope to succeed; and so crowds our cities with men and women for whom life is one prolonged and precarious struggle, with temptation ever yawning below them. "To dress it and to keep it"—so ran the charge of the Divine Educator to the first pupil, in the child-garden of the Eden legend. There is that in character which handicrafts alone seem to develop. Alike then for their indirect and their direct bearings on character and conduct, the introduction of manual training is of prime importance in the development of our Public School system.

III. *Atmosphere.* In the growth of the plant, atmospheric conditions are of at least coëqual importance with the nature of the seed sown and the kind of culture bestowed upon it. That subtle omnipotence, the ethical atmosphere of a school, must be looked after by the guardians of our youth. There are

schools which are charged with potent influences of goodness; in which the children breathe-in virtue. Of all that goes to form such atmospheric conditions, three factors may be mentioned.

The opening exercises may charge the air with ethical ozone, and create the spiritual temperature in which conscience buds and blooms. Music is of especial value to this end. The authorities upon education, from Plato to Froebel and Goethe, emphasize the function of music in moral education.\* It rouses and guides the feelings in any desired direction; and, when well used, charges the soul with pure passion, and molds the dispositions; and, by daily repetitions, its vibrations write the laws of noble life in the very tissues of the body. There is no one instrumentality so potent in spiritual influences. The wise master holds in it the wand with which he can touch the natures of his children, wakening responsive echoes, and keying the school to the right pitch. We are but beginning to realize its educational possibilities. At present it is used partly as a recreation, and partly as one more accomplishment to be acquired. We must learn how to use it in the fashioning of plastic character.

Personal influence remains always the last and most vital formative power in the atmospheric influences of a school. The schools that have been most noted for the culture of character, have always had a noble man or woman at the core of their wise systems. Arnold made Rugby. Some vital personality makes every school which makes men. We cannot hope to secure geniuses or saints for all our Peoples' Schools. They are not needful. We can, however, secure in hosts of our schools, as we have secured in many of them, men and women of high

\* "Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul graceful of him who is rightly educated. . . . And also because he who has received this true education of the inner being, with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over, and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, will justly blame and hate the bad, now, in the days of his youth, even before he is able to know the reason why; and when reason comes he will recognize and salute her as a friend."—Plato: "The Republic." Book III., §402. (Jowett.)

"Song is the first step in education; all the rest are connected with it, and attained by means of it. . . . What religious and moral principles we lay before our children, are communicated in the way of song."—Goethe: "Wilhelm Meister's Travels;" chapter 10.

character and of gracious personal influences, whose presence will be the prime factor in their culture of child character. To get them we must make the position more dignified and honorable, and, as such, more remunerative. The most important of society's functions must have the social status and the pecuniary rewards corresponding to the high worth of the teacher's service.

For all this work of moral education, the first step forward is the securing of a proper preparation for the specialty of character-culture in our Normal Schools. We must educate our educators.

R. HEBER NEWTON.

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REV. DR. PATTON.

THE practical question whether the teaching of morality in the public schools should be grounded in religion is very closely related to the philosophical question whether morality is itself grounded in religion. For, if religion conditions morality as we believe it does, alike as to its origin, authoritativeness, perpetuity, and content, this is a very strong reason why religion should enter prominently into ethical instruction.

What is morality? This is an important question, though some who ask "Why must I be moral?" do not think it necessary to say what they mean by being moral. It is generally assumed that morality is identical with that system of regulated conduct which prevails among people who regard the decalogue as the law of God. And when the decalogue is so regarded there is propriety, of course, in identifying morality with its teachings; but the case is altogether different when, instead of being considered as the divine norm of conduct, it is looked upon as simply the formulated expression of human experience. What conduct is entitled to be considered as moral? It may be felicitic conduct; if so, the law which enunciates it, instead of being couched in categorical terms, will always begin with an "if," and address itself to men by saying, "This is what you must do 'if' you wish to be happy or promote the happiness of others." Between the old doctrine of the categorical imperative, which says "Thou shalt," and the doctrine of egoistic Hedonism, also old, which says "This is the best in the long run," no successful compromise has as yet been effected, though several attempts at it have been made. Of these none is more worthy

of notice than that which is now being made under the auspices of the philosophy of evolution. Interpreting morality according to Leslie Stephen's exposition of it, we must suppose it to mean the system of regulated relations subsisting between the individuals who constitute what he calls the "social tissue." Moral conduct, according to this view, is therefore customary conduct. Customary conduct represents the conduct that promotes the life and health of the social organisms. So that the ethic of evolution has no categorical, but only a hypothetical imperative. It has no fixed standard. It uses the expression "moral law," but by this it means a generalization stating what the conduct of the organism approximately is, and not a command affirming what the conduct of the individual ought to be. This, however, is not the true meaning of morality. Moral conduct is obligatory conduct; it is conduct that a man *ought* to exhibit. So regarded, it is necessarily related to a standard of behavior, and the standard must be the antecedent of the behavior it is supposed to control. To take this position is to affirm an intuitional, and by necessary consequence a theological morality. For the meaning of "ought" is plain, simple, and undervived. It cannot be twisted or changed into anything else. It cannot be generated out of anything else. The expedient is not the obligatory. "Better not" will never grow up into "ought not." The old utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill failed to explain obligation; the new utilitarianism of Spencer and Stephen has had no better success.

Religion conditions morality as to origin. It also conditions it as to authoritativeness. Without a religious basis morality can have no authoritative basis. To this it may be objected that the feeling of obligation exists whatever its genesis may have been, and that being in existence, it must be operative while it lasts. But it is more than doubtful whether the authoritativeness of morality is sufficiently conserved by the bare fact that the feeling of obligation exists. For if there is no good reason for the feeling, the operative force of the feeling will be greatly abated. As long, of course, as a man feels that he ought, he will have an obligatory morality; but whether a man can feel that he ought, after he feels that the feeling need not be attended to, is another matter. Why should I be moral? Why should deologue-morality be my morality? And, above all, why should I feel any sense of obligatoriness about it? Aside

from supernaturalism there is no satisfactory answer to these questions. The Hedonist may say, "This is the way to act if you wish to be happy"; but he would be met with the reply, "Happiness, that is to say, my happiness, is my affair. I may have another idea of what constitutes happiness, or I may be willing to do without happiness altogether, and at all events it contributes to my happiness for the present to be my own judge of what will be conducive to my happiness in the long run." Again, the utilitarian may say, "This mode of acting will secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number," but the obvious reply to this would be that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is a problem that transcends human arithmetic, and that practically the happiness of the individual is the most sensible thing to think of, unless there be reasons against it better than those which utilitarianism has hitherto advanced. And once more the evolutionist will say, "This the way that you and all men must act if you care for the life, health, and happiness of the social organism." But to this it will be also replied that evolution does not furnish any means of determining what is best for the health of the organism; and that if it did, appeals in behalf of "social tissue" would have very little effect. Evolution must preach personal immortality if it is to secure sympathy for the immortality of society. If there is no life beyond this world for the individual, it matters very little how long there will be a life in this world for the organism. Morality will have fallen upon dark days when the pulpits preach virtue only for the sake of perpetuating society and promoting vigorous digestion in the members who compose it; for following the loss of an authoritative morality will sooner or later come the loss of morality itself.

Of course it is not contended that a general acceptance of empirical ethics would be followed immediately by a repudiation of all moral distinctions. Some account must be made of heredity. There is a certain ethical spontaneity, however it came into exercise, which would not immediately disappear after the ethics of evolution had been accepted. As long as men have their natural instincts, they will go on eating and drinking and caring for life, even though they may adopt a pessimistic theory of existence; and as long as men continue in possession of the ethical instincts which ordinarily influence them, they will exhibit a morality corresponding in a greater or less degree to

the requirements of the decalogue. Moreover, as long as public sentiment demands the practice of morality, we may expect the love of approval so natural to men to act as a barrier against vice. Then, too, the average morality called for by public sentiment will be reflected in legislation, and the sanction of law will save society from some of the more flagrant sins. And once more, though a man's selfishness may incline him to violate ethical propriety, that same selfishness may make him eager to punish such violations on the part of others. Self-interest will secure, for a time at least, the enforcement of laws that protect the fireside. Yet it needs no reasoning to show the insecurity of that morality, which is menaced by inclination, is reinforced by no sense of obligation, is looked upon as social conventionalism, and is kept within the trammels of law by a suspicious selfishness which makes every man distrust his neighbor and perform police duty in watching his behavior. We may concede that public sentiment will exercise a restraining influence after a sense of personal obligation has been lost; but the question is, how long this public sentiment will survive the destruction of the conscience. The conscience of the community cannot be more sensitive than the conscience of the individuals composing it, and when the conscience of the individual ceases to feel obligation, the conscience of the community will sooner or later cease to enforce obligation. We need not look for the inclination to be moral after we have given up the obligation to be moral; and evil inclination will not always be kept in check by the veto of society after it has ceased to fear the veto of the individual conscience. The moral sentiment which constitutes such an important part of our civilization is a religious sentiment. It backs the immutable distinctions of right and wrong by the stern sanction of the law of God. It has been generated through a long discipline, and though it will undoubtedly bear many shocks, it is too much to suppose that it could enter hopefully into the struggle against selfish appetites and desires, after the great principles which lie at its foundation and are the secret of its development had been discarded.

When we speak of the moral sentiment of our civilization, we mean, of course, Christian civilization; for while it is true that all authoritative morality implies belief in God, it is also true that the contents of our accepted morality are historically associ-

ated with the particular beliefs regarding God which are taught in the Bible. We cannot drop supernaturalism out of Bible-morality without sacrificing the authoritative value of that morality; for if that morality has only historic value, why am I bound to comply with it? Why should Christ's law regarding monogamy and divorce, why should his injunctions regarding love and forgiveness, influence men authoritatively if he has no exceptional place in history entitling him to speak authoritatively in declaration of God's will? Yet, it is substantially Christian morality, for which the advocates of a secular morality contend. Their problem is: How can we sever theology from ethics? How can we perpetuate as the practical guide of life a morality which is rooted in convictions of moral obligation, and which has been historically unfolded in Christianity, after the idea of moral obligation has been discarded, and Christianity has been accounted for under the rubrics of naturalistic evolution? These questions have no answer, and the attempt to find a new and non-religious foundation for morality must result in failure.

If we are right in holding that morality is grounded in religion, we need not ask whether the religious aspect of morality should have any place in ethical instruction, for a very important element in that instruction consists in stating the grounds of moral obligation. If the teaching of an exclusively secular morality were advocated only by those who hold that morality sustains no necessary relation to religion, we should not be required to say more than has been already said in support of the position advocated in this article. But the teaching of morality on non-religious grounds is sometimes advocated by those who are in full sympathy with the opinions here advanced, regarding the basis of moral obligation and the debt which ethics owes to Christianity. To teach the religious side of ethics in any degree is by some regarded as contrary to the American doctrine of the separation of Church and State, or as a tyrannical violation of the rights of conscience. We fail to see any force in either of these objections. As to the first, it is enough to make the distinction between Church and Religion. To say that the State cannot recognize religion because it cannot confer exclusive privileges on a particular form of religion, is absurd. To say that we may not be a Christian nation because no single denomination of Christians can lay claim to precedence, is *also*



absurd. Because we cannot Presbyterianize the State, it does not follow that we must Atheize it. But the State does recognize religion; and in teaching morality from a religious point of view, it is simply following its own precedents and conforming to the analogies of our national experience. As little justice is there in the plea that is sometimes made for the rights of conscience on the part of those, or on behalf of those, who do not believe in supernatural religion or, at all events, in Christianity. The principle of toleration is very precious, but it can be abused. Every man is entitled to the largest personal liberty consistent with the rights of his neighbors and his obligations to the Government. Every man has the right to believe or not to believe as he pleases. But he is bound to do his share toward the support of the State. What is best for the State is determined by the sovereign power, and the sovereign power among us finds expression in the will of majorities, and that will may express conscientious convictions. When the conscience of the majority expresses itself in favor of religious morality in the public schools, and the conscience of the minority in favor of non-religious morality, whose conscience is to be considered? It is sometimes forgotten, in this and in some other controversies, that there are two sides to this conscience-question, and it is too often assumed that the conscience of the majority should yield. This, however, is a very singular departure from Republican principles. Why should we yield to the wishes of the majority on all questions except those which can be made cases of conscience, and consent to submit the conscientious convictions of the mass to the rule of an oligarchy?

It is not doubted that some morality could be taught without any reference to religion. A code of conduct could be drawn up, and children might be required to learn a list of things that they must do and things that they must not do. Ethics could be learned in this externalistic way, as some people learn etiquette. But does ethical instruction consist in telling children that they must not lie, nor cheat, nor steal, nor swear, nor get drunk? It would be a very uninteresting boy who would not wish to know why he should not steal and lie if he felt so disposed; and a wretched system of instruction which made no provision for a proper answer to the question. Is a boy ready to meet the temptations that will assail his integrity when he enters upon the work of life and becomes acquainted with the lax morality of the world,

who has been told simply, on the authority of his teacher's word, that he must be honest? The education which stops with the enunciation of moral rules will not make a deep impression, for when the boy comes to compare the instruction of the school-room with the experience of real life, he will find that there is some incongruity between them. Arithmetic, he will find, was very much what he supposed it was; but as to honesty, truthfulness, and the like,—now that his eyes are open he sees there are a great many people who do not live as he was told to live. And why should he follow the word of the teacher rather than the example of those who, in the new life that lies before him, are his heroes? The secular morality that is proposed would give him no answer to this inquiry, or else it would give him a false one. The question before us, then, is simply this: Shall the children in our public schools be taught to be honest, sober, and truthful without a reason, or for false reasons, or for the true reason? We may as well teach no morality if we assign no reason for it. Shall children, then, be taught to be honest because honesty is right, or because honesty pays? Shall they be told that they ought to tell the truth, or that they will find it to their advantage to tell the truth? Shall they be told that they must not get drunk because drunkenness is not respectable, or because God has said that no drunkard shall enter the kingdom of heaven? The possibility of educating the conscience depends in great measure upon the answer that is given to these questions.

And this matter of educating the conscience is a very important part of ethical instruction: for the most serious questions which we are called to answer in the sphere of conduct are often those in regard to which no rules have been laid down, and to which no ready-made answers can be quoted. The Bible has not settled these questions in the form which they assume in the varying experiences of individual men. The Church cannot settle them; public opinion cannot settle them. They illustrate the autonomy of the conscience. They must be settled by the individual for himself in the sight of God. The most important part of ethical education is that which properly interprets and expounds the place of the individual conscience. Nothing should be allowed to supersede the conscience. No pledges or promises should supplant it. It must be enlightened, of course, but its supremacy must not

be challenged. Herein, indeed, lies the difficulty of the work that is imposed upon the individual, and the grave nature of his responsibility. He must decide, but he must bear the consequences of his mistakes. Herein is seen the importance of educating the conscience. There is needed that delicate moral sensibility which comes only as the result of a deep religious sense of moral obligation and the habitual exercise of the intellect in ethical discrimination. The crude canons of utilitarian ethics will not help a man in making these delicate measurements. For this work he needs an intimate knowledge of the great ethical principles of Christianity, and the craving for personal holiness which will lead him to make constant application of these principles to the concrete experience of every day. This is an education which must be continued in the great school of religious experience, but there is no reason why it should not be begun in the school-room of secular instruction. Moreover, the true teacher of morality will strive not only to cultivate the conscience so that there will be a knowledge of what is right, but also to cultivate the character so that there will be a disposition to do right. But what can mere secular morality do toward cultivating a high ethical nature? Has it a maxim? Has it a motive? Has it an ideal? Has it a future? Has it a sanction? Ask Spencer or Stephen. Christianity says: love God supremely, and your neighbor as yourself. It says: seek God's glory. It says: Jesus is the ideal man. It promises to his disciples personal immortality and the attainment of complete likeness to him. And it speaks in tones of terrific threatening to sinners. The new ethic has none of these elements, and, lacking these, it can have no transforming power.

The feeling expressed by the word "ought" is an ultimate fact in our constitution, and gives us an obligatory morality; but this feeling is inseparably associated with belief in the moral government of God. To preach an obligatory morality is really to preach a religious morality. But it is as important to know what we ought to do as to know that we ought to do it. And when we raise the question whether this or that is what we ought to do, we must have in mind some standard of right. Theists commonly believe this to be the nature or the will (as expressing the nature) of God. To teach morality on the basis of religion is then to command and forbid in the name of God. How, then, are we to know what God wills, or rather,

what is in accordance with his nature which is the norm of right ? The answer to this question must determine, in a measure, the mode of moral instruction. We might trust to intuition. But this would not lead us far. It would give us the empty category of obligation, but would not do much toward filling it. We might seek the will of God by inductions based upon the general experience of mankind. But the ethical *consensus* of mankind would cover a very small area, and we should soon find ourselves picking out such select ethical precepts as might happen to correspond to a preconceived ethical theory. Or, finally, we might accept some one religion as containing a revelation of God's will regarding human conduct. This is what the people of this country have done. Morality with us means Christian morality. Teaching morality means teaching Christian morality; and Christian morality rests upon revelation. We cannot say, with the author of "Natural Religion," that supernaturalism is an accident and is not of the essence of Christianity; for Christianity, bereft of its supernaturalism, loses authority in respect to both ethics and religion. Christian morality must be inculcated as the known expression of God's will. Protestants and Roman Catholics are in full accord upon this point, though they hold antagonistic views regarding the mode in which moral instruction should be conveyed. It is not likely that the Christian people who are known by these names can ever unite in the cordial support of the existing system of public education; but it is certain that as long as they retain their Christian convictions they will express their disapproval of every proposition that contemplates a non-religious system of ethical instruction.

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